

CLEARWATER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING

February 6, 2019 – 5:30 PM – Main Library – Council Chambers

Members Present:	Paris Morfopoulos	Chairman
	Venkat “Vincent” Devineni	Vice-Chairman
	Thomas Wright	Member
	Lina Teixeira	Member
	Ray Cassano	Member
	Stu Sjouwerman	Member
Also Present:	David Allbritton	Ex-officio Member/Councilmember
	Amanda Thompson	CRA Director
Not Present:	Caitlein Jammo	Treasurer
	Anne Fogarty France	Board Administrator
	Hoyt Hamilton	Ex-officio Member/Councilmember

1. Chairman Morfopoulos called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. Citizens Comments--Items not on the agenda. None.
3. Approve the Minutes from the January 2, 2019, Meeting

Member Cassano moved to approve the minutes from the January 2, 2019, meeting. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:

Ayes: Chairman Morfopoulos, Vice-Chairman Devineni, Member Sjouwerman, Member Teixeira, and Member Wright.

Nays: None.

Motion carried.

4. Adopt December 2018 Financial Statement for Filing

Member Sjouwerman moved to adopt the March 2018 Financial Statement for filing. The motion was duly seconded. Upon roll call, the vote was:

Ayes: Chairman Morfopoulos, Vice-Chairman Devineni, Member Cassano, Member Teixeira, and Member Wright.

Nays: None.

Motion carried.

5. Adopt 2018 Annual Financial Report and Audit Results – Andrew Laflin, CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, presented a slideshow with copies of the report and summarized that there were “no problems or surprises” preparing the report. Discussion followed involving clarification of the decrease in interest income and of the \$48,000 loan to the CRA.

Mr. Laflin introduced Lance Schmidt, also a principal with CLA, who will be conducting next year’s DDB audit. Chairman Morfopoulos commended the staff members whose work throughout the year keeps the records clean and makes this audit “uneventful”.

6. Post Event Report – Clearwater Super Boat National Championships – Frank Chivas reported that, despite news of red tide in other Pinellas locations, it was another successful Super Boat weekend with a busy Friday night included. Attendance was estimated at 130,000 over the three days, of which: 46% were Pinellas residents; 30% were daytrippers with an average of 3.2 people in the party; 22% were overnight visitors with an average of 2.9 people in the party and a minimum of three nights, and 10,700 hotel rooms were booked. Of the out-of-towners, 43% were repeat visitors.

The total economic impact was estimated at \$17.8M.

Upon request of Chairman Morfopoulos, Mr. Chivas stated that his budget for the event is approximately \$100,000. Items of consideration include insurance, permits, and work with - for the most recent event - 13 government agencies. This is also the final year of Mr. Chivas' original 10-year commitment to managing the event.

Discussion turned to the popularity of the Ferris wheel downtown over the holidays and news that Mr. Chivas has a commitment to fund a permanent attraction, and options for the upcoming availability of 15-1/2 acres in the downtown area.

This discussion included the concern that the county would move offices to the 49th Street complex, and it was noted by Mr. Allbritton that a previous DDB BOD had written a letter in support of maintaining the downtown Clearwater location. **Chairman Morfopoulos proposed an agenda item for the next meeting to address the matter, and the board agreed unanimously.**

Further discussion of a “vibrant downtown” revolved around the need to attract younger people and the importance of an educational institution in that plan. CRA Director Thompson noted the alignment with the DDB Work Plan item of “establishing contact with USF.”

7. Post Event Report - Achieva Box Car Rally – Chelsey Wilson was not able to attend the meeting; the presentation will be rescheduled.
8. Update on Auction for Jazz Holiday Posters – Member Teixeira has all of the framed posters in her possession and reports that many have fine framing and several are signed; each is being evaluated by Mr. Hallas. Wrapping up previous discussion about sharing the profits with the Jazz Holiday, the DDB agreed not to share profits as the posters were gifted to the DDB.

Member Teixeira confirmed her offer to host a jazz-inspired auction with no cost to the DDB. She hoped to have the event complete by the end of March and will report details at the next meeting.

9. Approve CRA Request to use \$25,000 Budget Line Item / Art-Tech Exhibitions for Downtown Clearwater Augmented Reality Experience – CRA Director Thompson reported on the success of the Dali exhibit, which Ex-officio Member Allbritton reported saw 200+ visitors on the last Blast Friday, and the development of a phone application to carry that theme out to the street. The application would allow a user to point the phone at a location in downtown Clearwater including Cleveland Street and the Pinellas Trail, see an overlay, and get information regarding that location and what they're seeing.

Response from the board was enthusiastic: Member Sjouwerman stated that blending art and tech is a good idea; Member Teixeira feels art and tech is a “very organic combination” and would attract the youth to downtown. CRA Director Thompson thanked the board for the consensus and

agreed to provide an update with which the board could form a MOTION and it was agreed to set the item for a future agenda.

10. DDB Work Plan (WP) Updates – CRA Director Thompson (reporting in place of Anne Fogarty France, Business Assistance Manager, who was out ill) noted that the WP created in May 2018 was intended to be flexible and those assigned or volunteering as contacts on each item should report progress or problems so the board can focus on support where needed.

The Harborview asbestos removal is underway, and the exterior could see demolition as soon as March 1; however, it was stressed that no outside sign of demo should occur without the demo party in place. The process of crowd-sourcing photos to project on the outside of the building as interior demolition progresses and the idea of chalk art and a green screen ‘smash pics’ photo booth were discussed, with a possible demo party date of March 31.

Member Wright noted that fireworks should be involved and that March 29 is a Blast Friday.

CRA Director Thompson stated that, as part of the PR scope of services, Rosemary D'Amour would be creating various listserves to communicate the stories of Clearwater. Goals are: 1, shifting the perception of Clearwater; 2, increasing foot traffic in downtown; and 3, increasing private investment.

CRA Director Thompson met with the board attorney, Elise K. Winters, about the bylaws update. The attorney estimated five hours of time for the review and expects to have a memo ready within the next two weeks.

11. Special Event Strategy 2019 – CRA Director Thompson noted the need to clarify by March the DDB's direction in funding of special events. i.e. Does leaning toward larger events mean no ‘open call’ for the smaller events of the past, or should special language be added to the application regarding plans? Consideration should be given to items such as: the audience; focus on larger events; focus on restaurants and retail businesses; funding partners, e.g. Ruth Eckerd Hall. Also, perhaps a change in the process would be considered to quarterly applications or tiered funding. Time to set up administrative support for changes should be noted.

Chairman Morfopoulos opened the discussion regarding wording on the applications about changes in funding consideration, where Member Teixeira stated her opinion that downtown needs both larger and smaller events. Member Wright stated his understanding of the decision to shift funding to larger events of greater value to downtown. CRA Director Thompson noted that the budget does not support only large or only small events. **The board agreed to continue the discussion at the March meeting.**

12. CRA Update – CRA Director Thompson stated that 4,000+ people attended the Holiday Extravaganza. CRA funding is a three-year commitment with other partners. The movies generated a lot of excitement. Ideas for other winter events are welcome.

The Ring is open! Please promote that story about downtown Clearwater.

The parking report suggests modernizing equipment, and recommends shared parking as an interim solution to the upcoming 500-space deficit. The City Parking Manager position is currently vacant.

Temporary uses for City Hall were briefly discussed, and Ex-officio Councilmember Allbritton stated that a spring break Jolley Trolley stop would be set at the City Hall parking lot in an effort to

encourage the park-and-ride opportunity and to keep causeway traffic down. CRA Director Thompson noted the connection with the “vacant to vibrant” goal.

Member Teixeira also noted that a new pedestrian sign is larger than most parking signs and expressed a wish that this could be reversed.

13. **Chairman’s Report**—Chairman Morfopoulos noted the high quality of a recent promotional email from the City regarding a large number of events and activities. Discussion centered on the need for a list of at least 100,000 email addresses for the DDB to make a real impact, noting that we are here to serve the taxpayers for whom a quarterly update on goals and their statuses would be a great benefit. It was suggested that the next mailing solicit those email addresses and include a short survey of taxpayer needs.

He announced upcoming events and noted that more information could be found on downtownclearwater.com.

14. Final Comments

Member Sjouwerman had no further comments.

Member Cassano thanked the CRA for the excellent murals, said downtown is looking much better, and feels funding of a permanent ferris wheel should be allowed.

Member Teixeira is excited about the Harborview party and feels this will be a monumental event for downtown.

Vice Chairman Devineni likes the idea of connecting with USF or SPC or even a small arts institute to bring the youth to downtown, and wonders about the possibility of more actively managing the DDB’s portion of the City investment funds.

Member Wright is excited about the direction things are taking and wished Amanda the best as she begins her maternity leave.

Ex-officio Councilmember Allbritton felt it was a successful super boat race, that Mr. Chivas had some good ideas, and that letter to the City regarding maintaining county offices in the downtown area was a great idea.

Chairman Morfopoulos feels there is some unusually exciting news happening in the City Hall area.

15. The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.